

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A direct thermal printer, comprising:
 - 5 a thermal energy source;
 - a thermal energy modulator receiving thermal energy from the thermal energy source and transmitting modulated thermal energy to a thermal print medium; and
 - a controller coupled to the thermal energy source
 - 10 and the thermal energy modulator.
2. The direct thermal printer of claim 1, wherein the thermal energy source is a laser.
- 15 3. The direct thermal printer of claim 2, wherein the thermal energy modulator is a movable reflective surface.
4. The direct thermal printer of claim 1 is wherein the thermal energy source is a heater element.
- 20 5. The direct thermal printer of claim 4 wherein the thermal energy modulator is an LCD shutter device.
6. The direct thermal printer of claim 1 is wherein the
- 25 6. thermal energy source is a radiant light device.
7. The direct thermal printer of claim 6 wherein the thermal energy modulator is an LCD shutter device.
- 30 8. The direct thermal printer of claim 1, further comprising a thermal medium drive mechanism coupled to the controller.
9. The direct thermal printer of claim 1, wherein the output power of the thermal energy source is controlled by the
- 35 9. controller.

10. A direct thermal printer, comprising:

5 thermal energy source means for generating thermal energy;

 thermal energy moderator means for receiving thermal energy from the thermal energy source and transmitting modulated thermal energy to a thermal print medium; and

10 controller means, coupled to the thermal energy source means and the thermal energy moderator means for controlling the operations of the direct thermal printer.

11. A thermal printer, comprising:

15 a direct thermal print head comprising an array of laser elements;

 a thermal medium drive mechanism; and

 a controller coupled to the direct thermal print head and the thermal medium drive mechanism.

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